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**CREATING CITY CHIC.
THE PARISIAN INFLUENCE ON INTERWAR BUCHAREST
FASHION**

Abstract: This paper examines the influence of urban fashion ideas disseminated worldwide from France and how they impacted the Romanian ideas of style and beauty, as well as the nature of the communication between Paris and the so-called "Little Paris". My aim is to decode the interwar Romanian interpretation of the new woman notion and assess what type of role contemporary French gender philosophies had played in its creation. For this, I will investigate the nature of this inter-capital dialogue in order to determine the intersections and contrasts, which I will integrate within the larger cultural, social, economic and political context in Romania, France, and worldwide. I will treat women's fashion as the materialization of multiple factors pertaining to interwar Bucharest's private and public life habits, as a capital embracing both modernity and tradition with an original tone. My sources include relevant local, national and international publications, including periodicals, contemporary books, guides and memoirs. These will also provide a clearer scope of the Parisian influence through articles and fashion spreads, but also through the multitude of ads published throughout interwar Romania. Furthermore, I will underline the theoretical and aesthetic influence Romanians had on Parisian fashion from two points of view. The first will be the case of women used by artists or public and private entities as models or passive agents in fashion creation and dissemination. I will use the Miss Romania pageants as a general example, alongside the more complex story of dancer Lizica Codreanu and her connection to Constantin Brâncuși and Tristan Tzara, and through him to Sonia

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Delaunay. For the second category I will use the example of Alice Cocea and Elvire Popesco as movie fashion icons, and of Princess Marthe Bibesco as both a style influencer and fashion theoretician.

Keywords: interwar, Bucharest, fashion, chic, style, Paris, beauty, gender.

Introduction

As a progeny of Greater Romania, modern Bucharest fashioned itself, at least in appearance, as a Western-style capitalist metropolis. As part of this model, the fashionable women occupied the public space, whether the street, café or beauty and fashion establishments. They functioned as unofficial ambassadors for Romania's modern image, directed towards the Western gaze. The French influence remained a key factor in the cultural and stylistic equation, the fashionable Bucharesters hence continued to use Parisian sources for advice, models and products. However, this was not a unidirectional transfer of information. Notable Romanian women, especially of aristocratic or artistic backgrounds, were treated by Parisians as genuine fashion icons, in themselves as markers of elegance and style through their appearance and demeanour, but also as influencers and theoreticians. Consequently, this paper treats the fashion-related communications between Paris and Bucharest as a multidimensional field of intersecting ongoing and outgoing data transmissions. This model becomes relevant, since the participants and the exchanges cannot be clearly separated.

I will examine the way in which fashion was created, produced and disseminated in Paris and its impact on the Bucharest fashion and beauty industry. For this, I will use high and street fashion photographs and depictions from my personal collection, as well as the social life and fashion pages in periodicals, juxtaposed with relevant ads spread throughout the Romanian press and public spaces. Moreover, I will analyze the source of the trends, products and ideas claimed to be "straight from Paris", especially in connection to Romanian personalities.

I will focus on women's fashion and beauty practices pertinent to the cultural, economic, sartorial and artistic exchanges between Paris and Bucharest as depicted in both written and visual texts. My methodological apparatus includes cultural studies (specifically applied on fashion, beauty, gender and modernity), semiotics for image

interpretation, historical and sociological data for the contextualization of my research. I will use these to highlight the complexity of the interwar Bucharest society as reflected through its relationship with fashion, which at that time remained strongly connected to Paris. Bucharest's city chic was thus built on modern and traditional celebrity culture, at the beginning of ready-made as an aspect of modern mechanization, alongside Hollywood's claim of fashion supremacy, which received an equally strong response from the French haute couture creators and promoters. My paper will illustrate these phenomena through the lens of interwar Bucharest.

Modern City Fashions: Paris, Bucharest

Fashion, understood as a system of capitalist exchange with perpetually modified practical, aesthetic and theoretical parameters, is inherently connected to modernity. Until the late nineteenth century, fashion functioned chiefly as a practice within social and economic elite circles that would eventually be applied to the general public. It changed in a relatively short span of time by the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially after World War I. This was in tandem with the technological and philosophical developments that marked the shift toward modernity. Bucharest had become a fertile ground for social and technological progress, at least in its areas that were to be observed by the outer, Western gaze. In 1926, Canadian-born writer married to the Galați port captain Vasile Pantazzi, Ethel Greening Pantazzi and illustrated by Romanian artist Julieta Theodorini published a textual and visual account of interwar Bucharest, in its national and international context. Greening-Pantazzi attributed Romania's accelerated path towards progress and modernity to King Ferdinand I's ascension to the throne, and the dramatic changes following the end of World War I¹. During that time, Romania was rebuilding and reorganizing itself to

¹ Ethel Greening Pantazzi and Julieta Theodorini, *Strolls in Old Corners of Bucharest*, Bucharest, Cultura Națională (The National Culture), 1926, p. 8.

better serve a population that had increased to seventeen million². Even if the national and international conditions were far from being ideal, Greening Pantazzi and Theodorini were optimistic about Romania's potential of growing prosperity and becoming a peace, harmony, and order beacon in South Eastern Europe³.

The ever-changing historical circumstances are also an integral part of defining a country's character. According to Romanian historian Lucian Boia, during historical upheavals, countries like Romania are bound to make important choices that fundamentally mark their future. Romania made the choice to move towards the West⁴. Even though Romania has made several important historical choices, it was yet to reach its final allegiances, which makes it unique. While Romania's adoption of Western models was broad and hasty, on an imaginary level it could become a Western European extension. What sets it apart, he concludes, is its lack of a clear direction, as it continues to look towards Europe and beyond. Yet sympathetic visitors appreciated the intention. British traveller Lucy Hamilton-Zay offered a succinct description of Bucharest's modernity, as the Little Paris of the East yet also accommodating to visitors from the British Isles, in the early years of Greater Romania:

"Bucharest a beautiful city, the capital of the whole of Roumania, proudly calls herself «the little Paris». Here are the foreign Legations, many splendid modern buildings, a University, several Museums, an English church, school, hospital, and now we have a branch of the Overseas-British Club, and an English Chamber of Commerce. Every side boasts great wealth and luxury, and the people pride themselves on being much in touch with the world at large"⁵.

The Parisian influence on interwar Bucharest extended beyond the architectural and sartorial appearance. At the same time, the cultural

² Luminița Machedon and Ernie Shoffham, *Romanian Modernism. The Architecture of Bucharest, 1920-1940*, Cambridge, MA and London, MIT Press, 1999, p. 14.

³ Greening Pantazzi and Theodorini, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

⁴ Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2001, p. 12.

⁵ Lucy Hamilton-Zay, *My Note Book on Romania*. Bucharest, Cartea Romanească, no date (1920s), p. 20.

and aesthetic impact Romanian expatriates, especially in the avant-garde world, effected on French identity was equally powerful. Furthermore, personalities of Romanian heritage, like aristocrat writer Anna de Noailles (1876, Paris – 1933, Paris) chose to exaggerate their French identity, in a way that furthered their social standing as foreign, albeit distinguished, individuals⁶. She was also a fashion icon herself and one of Chanel's early aristocratic adopters and promoters⁷. Historian and literary critic Sultana Craia explained Romania's francophone tradition in terms of cultural and artistic affinity. By the interwar era, Paris had been attracting a plethora of intellectuals and artists from Europe and beyond, who found in France a fertile ground for innovative creative pursuits. Among these, Craia argued, Romanians were even more inclined to veer toward Paris because of a heartfelt impression of familiarity. This feeling was built on the notion of *fraternité* or fraternity, as heard during the French Revolution. Furthermore, she argued, that Romania's Latinity also played a crucial role in the strong appeal French culture has had on Romanians⁸. In her hard-cover high-quality 500-page memoir published by the Official Gazette and the National State Printing Press, Roxane J. Berindei Mavrocordato emphatically expressed the attraction Paris exerted for Romanians, especially for women, as a capital of elegance and beauty:

"Paris! City of light, city of magic, a unique city that attracts you towards it, just as a lover, the aspirations, the innumerable wishes of the entire world; a pivot around which everything turns, Paris, dreamy flower for which all the bees, wishing to gather pollen, to perfume the honey with their spirit. Paris, omnipotent majesty, which consecrates or condemns without recourse. Paris, lighthouse and guide on the ocean of ambition for those chosen by the ideal. Paris, north star for the earth's

⁶ Mihai Dimitrie Sturdza, *Aristocrați români în lumea lui Proust: Anton Bibescu, Martha Bibescu, Anne de Noailles, Elena Bibescu / Romanian Aristocrats in the world of Proust: Anton Bibescu, Martha Bibescu, Anne de Noailles, Elena Bibescu*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2016, p. 144.

⁷ Axel Madsen, *Chanel: A Woman of Her Own*, New York, H. Holt, 1990, p. 131.

⁸ Sultana Craia, *Francofonie și francofilie la Români / Francophony and Francophilia for the Romanians*, Bucharest, Demiurg, 1995, p. 96.

images, for all those who communicate the truth, the good. Paris at last, land of beauty, Paris beauty of the world”⁹.

Moreover, Romania’s deep link to France was conducive to an organic yet visceral attraction towards the so-called *Parisian spirit* in terms of fashion, which made it not only the French capital of fashion, but the international beacon of style and elegance¹⁰. Because of this, it is safe to assume that the influence of French fashion on elegant Bucharesters was not a simple emulation for the sake of keeping themselves up-to-date with the latest trends. Even more, as the dialogue between the two capitals is a complex bilateral exchange of information and talent, the French accent in interwar Romanian’s fashion became a matter of self-expression, as seen in the artistic world. Consequently, I will feature a series of examples illustrating the complex interrelations between both the French and Romanian cultural and artistic world, but also between the arts, especially those perceived as elitist pursuits, in contrast to those dedicated to the masses, especially towards the bourgeoisie.

Yet Bucharest’s likening to Paris is not unanimous among researchers. French historian Catherine Durandin rejected this designation, arguing that Bucharest was anything but a city to visit with a guide, in comparison to the rigorous and methodical Parisian layout¹¹. Bucharest’s urban architectural modernization was a blend between French and North American models. In this way, buildings in the eclectic French style, including the Romanian Athenaeum, the ancient Royal Palace, the National Bank or the Cotroceni Palace, rose alongside sky scrapers such as the Palace of the Telephones, to this day a central Bucharest monument¹². Even more, Bucharest’s recreation and

⁹ Roxane J. Berindei Mavrocordato, *En tournant les pages. Mémoires/Turning the Pages. Memories*, Bucharest, Official Gazette and the National State Printing Press, 1939, p. 51.

¹⁰ Agnès Rocamora, “Paris, Capitale de la Mode: Representing the Fashion City in the Media”, in Christopher Breward, David Gilbert (eds), *Fashion’s World Cities*, Oxford and New York, Berg, 2006, (pp. 43–54) p. 45.

¹¹ Catherine Durandin, *Bucureşti. Amintiri şi plimbări / Bucharest. Memories and Promenades*, Magda Cârnci (ed), Horia Mihail Vasilescu (trans), Bucharest, Paralela 45, 2004, pp. 139-140.

¹² See Narcis Dorin Ion, *Bucharest Monuments*, Bucharest, Noi Media Print, 2011, p. 7.

socialization spots were linked by the promenades on newly built or renovated large boulevards (hotels, restaurants, cafes, public gardens, etc.). All these were invested by the new bourgeois society with the quality of socio-cultural institutions and gave the capital an intense and glamorous mostly nocturnal life¹³, within a network of multifaceted and lively ways of urban socialization and leisure. Nevertheless, as it was understood in the interwar era, the idea of Little Paris did not refer to architecture, but precisely to the Parisian spirit foreigners longed for.

With the information transfer becoming increasingly swift, the dissemination of fashion ideas and items grew in pace, while the costs were significantly curtailed. This meant the interested public was taught to expect the immediate availability of the latest fashions, which also increased the profitability of ready-made products. This shift was also felt in Paris. High fashion creators were faced with the dilemma of satisfying their elitist clientele by maintaining a secretive manufacture *atelier*, or opening to a larger, hungry audience by extending their brands to *prêt-à-porter* lines. This trend was also reflected in interwar Bucharest both through the adoption of the Parisian notion of elegance, and through the process of industrialization that heavily affected textile manufacturing. Therefore, the scope of fashion research extends beyond fabrics and cuts, to determining the variations that occur in modified dissemination, production, adoption and rejection agents. In other words, the interpretations applied to the origins of the garments, the path to their sellers or creators and ultimately to the wearer can be meaningfully altered when one or more aspects in the chain of fashion consumerism diverge from the previously accepted norm.

While fashion, in its modern and postmodern urban context, is visibly connected to the idea of consumerism, treating it only as such would represent an extreme simplification of an otherwise highly complex phenomenon¹⁴. Even more, the relationship between women and the urban space is a pertinent yet complicated facet of identifying social gender dynamics. Consumerism is but one aspect of the social, economic and political advancement toward modernity. This shift can

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 94-97.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Contradictions of Culture. Cities, Culture, Women*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage, 2001, p. 65.

occur both as result of social, political or economic developments, but also as part of the same timeframe as an ideological, philosophical or moral dissension. The interwar era represented a complex array of revolutionary sartorial changes as a strong response to the trauma generated by World War I. This need for emancipation, as well as practicality, translated into what art and fashion critic Anne Hollander termed "*fashionable immodesty*", in contrast with the traditional norms in displaying, covering and uncovering the female body. The interwar Romanian feminine ideal partly borrowed this immodesty, while it remained endowed with respectability and poetic sense. In other words, the interwar high fashion mainly constituted what had previously been considered improper¹⁵. While the 'modern' French women were revered for their perceived independence and charm¹⁶, these same qualities set them apart as exaggeratedly exotic, individuals to admire from afar or interact briefly, but unsuited for commitment and imitation.

This reactive attitude places interwar women's fashion in the same arena with the literary and artistic avant-garde, itself a violent response to the old world, especially as its ways led to an unprecedented global catastrophe. Like the modern understanding of fashion, the avant-garde is also a logical outcome of the scientific, industrial and cultural revolutions beginning from the mid nineteenth century. Yet, unlike the mechanization of reality imagined and sold as a modern commodity, the avant-garde introduced a radicalized prospect which violently contested the current artistic and literary expression, receiving an equally acrimonious critique. Poet and avant-garde literary historian Ion Pop underlined the interwar era's comprehensive need for linguistic and aesthetic stimulation and renewal. The goal was reaching spiritual fulfilment by highlighting and intensifying the creative process in a completely innovative manner:

In fact, the avant-garde radicalizes and absolutizes a more general obsession in the era's literature and art, which was that of dynamism, of opposition to anything that could illustrate the static, an inertia of spirit. This maximalism precisely grants it the particular accent,

¹⁵ Anne Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, p. 339.

¹⁶ See Princess Claire Mavrocordato, "Farmecul femeii franceze / The French Woman's Charm", in *Mariana*, no. 9, 1 June 1939, p. 3.

pushing the dynamic principle to the extreme, until the explosion of known forms and structures of communication, exacerbating a vitality that does not support any way of thinking, establishing a world of the *always possible*, of continual availability and metamorphosis¹⁷.

In the same way, even before the visible style change from the flapper to the glamorous diva, the Romanian press announced the arrival of a *new woman*, radically different from her past incarnation. This was a reversed avant-garde act, in which older models were seen as superior were called for to replace the new. *Realitatea Ilustrată* presented the new fashions that would mark the coming decade, as made for svelte and supple women whose sportive grace would be feminized by the new lines¹⁸. By the end of the month, the same magazine's fashion column officially announced that fashion has radically changed. The skirts became much longer, requiring much more fabric, while the waist was raised significantly, and the hips were narrow. The author only presented as Assunta, mentioned the widespread view that these changes expressed a new femininity, a new feminine style. Dresses would again emphasize the chest area, while women were now pressured to maintain small hips, or lose weight accordingly. Because of the new requirements for what the author called childish hips, the women will no longer walk, instead they will trip. Even more, impressionist folds reminiscent of Renoir or Manet were revived under a stylized form through the lens of the experiences fashion has gained throughout the past half-century. The new fashion, Assunta added, seemed to only be accessible to the wealthier women, and she advised her readers to avoid anything that may seem cheap or easily copied. Because of this, fur mantles had become a rarity in Paris or Berlin, due to the impossibility to tell apart the genuine ones from the imitations¹⁹. This was part of the conceptual change from the idea of the slender *garçonne* of the 1920s, to that of the glamorous, curvy woman of the 1930s.

¹⁷ Ion Pop, *Avangarda în literatura română / The Avant-Garde in Romanian Literature*, Chișinău, Cartier, 2017, p. 9.

¹⁸ Yvette, "Ce se poartă / What Is Fashionable", in *Realitatea Ilustrată*, no. VII.312, January 1933, p. 24.

¹⁹ Assunta. "Moda iarna / Winter Fashion", in *Realitatea ilustrată*, no. III.44, October 1929, p. 31.

The modern understanding of fashion relies on a continuous mass diffusion of the latest ideas and items, which subsequently functions as a method of translation. Philosopher, linguist, semiotician and critic Roland Barthes described it as a process of transformation, from a physical piece of clothing to what he terms as “representation”, achieved by so-called “shifters” who operate in recoding trends²⁰. He identified three distinct such shifters: the sewing patterns transforming clothes from iconic to technological, the fashion text which delineates the procedural aspects transforming it from technological to written, while the third becomes the representation itself, the garment’s description as employed by fashion magazines, transforming it from written to spoken²¹. The interwar Romanian press mirrored the third model. As early as 1923, the bilingually titled almanac for all stylish Bucharest *Almanach du High-Life*, written in French, for Romanian readers. The article simply titled *La mode (Fashion)* featured a five-page detailed descriptive account of the fashions of late 1922 and indications for the best style and beauty choices for the new year. The basic assumption was that, as ephemeral as fashion is, women were always interested in keeping abreast with all the latest changes and ideas²². The author also mentioned several key French designers of interest, all with slightly misspelled names. In this way, Lanvin, was rewritten as ‘Lauvin’, or Chanel as ‘Channel’²³. Consequently, textual and visual translation often failed to be rendered faithfully to their source. Their meaning, however, was recognized, as anybody would understand the above-mentioned article mentioned two of the most important French couturières at that time.

Romania’s commerce flow also included a linguistic migration aspect. Fashionable or even random English and French words had been often used for company and shop names. Fashion language dictated the use of French words in Italics as the stylish way to describe locations, outfits or specific notions. Native words, even if etymologically Latin,

²⁰ Roland Barthes, “Written Clothing”, in Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun (eds), *The Fashion Reader*, Oxford, Berg, 2014, p. 133.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 133-134.

²² M.R. ”La mode / Fashion”, in *Tout-Bucarest. Almanach du High-Life*, Bucharest, Société pour ‘L’Indépendance Roumaine’, 1923, (pp. 65-68) p. 65.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

were avoided. It was inherently assumed that everybody understood French or English, which was often not the case, and in time lead to a genuine language problem on Calea Victoriei and Lipscani. This issue became so prevalent that extended glossaries added to fashion texts, or descriptions of Bucharest's businesses, became a common sight. In 1934, *Realitatea Ilustrată* published a comprehensive piece dedicated to this phenomenon of mass confusion. Before the War, many cafés chose English names: *Five O'clock*, *High Life*, later known simply as *Cafeneaua Elitei* (*Elite Café*), or *Tea-Room*, which maintained its popularity and distinguished clientele throughout the interwar era. The next step was the social adoption of foreign vocabulary, first at face value, following attrition by frequent use. Elegant Bucharesters began referring to any stylish café as 'high-life' or 'tea room,' spelled 'tirum,' the author sarcastically added²⁴. By the end of the interwar era, the usage of actual translations or Romanian words began to gain more popularity in specialized or journalistic language, as an indirect effect of the Romanianization program. For example, socks would be termed as *chausettes* in the early 1920s, the Romanian spelling of *sosete* appeared more normal in the second half of the interwar era. While the French would not yet feel strange in the 1930s, it received a dimension of pompousness. However, for manuals such as *Călăuza croitorului* (*The Tailor's Guide*) published by D. Theodorescu, the president of the Romanian Academy of Tailoring and Fashions, even basic fashion and textile terms proved to be problematic. After an eighteen-page professional glossary, Theodorescu added a disclaimer informing his readers and students of possible inaccurate definitions due to the French, English or German etymologies, that had yet to be fully integrated into Romanian²⁵. This could also be applied to literary texts regarding fashion

²⁴ S.V. "Firme neînțelese / Incomprehensible Signs", in *Realitatea Ilustrată*, 19 December 1934, p. 30

²⁵ D. Theodorescu, *Călăuza Croitorului. "Carnetul General de Măsuri Proportionate". Stabilit Pentru Sistemele de Croeala Proprii. / The Tailor's Guide. "General Proportionate Measures Notebook." Established for Specific Tailoring Systems*, Bucharest, The "Tiparul Academic" Graphic Institute, 1935, p. 139.

and beauty. The area of examination is thereby extended beyond academic limits, to popular arts and culture.

Furthermore, image decoding and the techniques used in creating and displaying the visual depend entirely on the specific localisation and culture for any analysed space. When reading an image, the idea of conversation between two individuals is replaced with that of a complex dialogue involving the creator and the observer, as well as the subject and anybody else involved in its dissemination and presentation²⁶. Interwar Bucharesters prioritized commercial decisions based on close connections to Paris. Textile and beauty product sellers frequently announced any new shipment of products or models directly from Paris. While some *haute couture* houses flourished in Bucharest, it was more frequent for textile retail stores to present themselves as *Maison*, or *Houses*, to which they added a creative name, or in other cases the owner's name or moniker. Even more, despite Hollywood's growing popularity in Romania's Westernized spaces and American local or foreign actors were viewed as genuine icons, any serious fashion article in the general or women's press always return to the Parisian perspective in their presentation and analysis.

Fashion Icons: From Paris to Little Paris and Back

While artistic modernism began in the nineteenth century, the scientific and cultural timeline of modernity could extend as far back as the Renaissance. Because of its broadness of use and understanding, the term escapes a clear definition or the nature of its relationship with its successive cultural currents such as postmodernism²⁷. Fashion was equally connected to modernism and modernity as both an artistic and technological pursuit. Yet its connection to the arts was especially intricate, as it stemmed from within the world of fine arts itself. One of the key personalities blending the aesthetically sacred and profane, was Sonia Delaunay (1885, Hradízk, Ukraine – 1979, Paris). While an accomplished painter herself and has been credited as cofounder of

²⁶ Marcus Banks. *Visual Methods in Social Research*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage, 2001, pp. 9-10.

²⁷ Chris Rohmann, *The Dictionary of Important Ideas and Thinkers*, London, Arrow, 2002, p. 265.

artistic Orphism, Sonia chose to financially support her husband and partner, painter Robert Delaunay (1885, Paris – 1941, Montpellier) by working as a couturiere and as a book cover, car and interior designer²⁸. She can also be credited as one of the first fashion designers who were open to mass production systems through the use of a stencil, *pochoir* technique²⁹. The Delaunays were good friends with Romanian-born, then Paris-based Tristan Tzara (1896, Moinești – 1963, Paris) before he adopted his famous penname and was still known as Samuel Rosenstock³⁰ or S. Samyro when published in the Romanian *Simbolul* magazine³¹. Sonia created an entire collection of costumes for performances on Tzara's works, or dresses inspired by or containing his poems.

A pertinent example would represent the iterations of Tzara's work in which the main protagonist was avant-garde dancer and later hatha-yoga pioneer in Paris, Lizica Codreanu (1901, Bucharest – 1993, Louveciennes, France). While Sonia's involvement as set and costume designer for the production was implicit, Lizica's participation was not always as certain. For instance, in 1923 Tzara had to insist on convincing Lizica to consider performing for a special event titled *La soirée de coeur à barbe* (*The Bearded Heart Soiree*) with Sonia Delaunay costumes. His persistence was successful, as Lizica became one of the performing headliners for a two-part event that blended futurism, cubism, constructivism and Dadaism under one artistic expression. The evening was not without controversy, as much of the spectacle was created by a violent outburst by French poet and surrealism founder Paul Éluard who was intent on disturbing the controversial *Le cœur à barbe* (*The Bearded Heart*). If the event had followed the program, the first half would have included poem readings from French poet, writer and

²⁸ See Axel Madsen, *Sonia Delaunay: Artist of the Lost Generation*, New York, Open Road Media, 2015.

²⁹ Cristina Giorcelli, "Wearing the Body over the Dress. Sonia Delaunay's Fashionable Clothes", in Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz (eds.), *Accessorizing the Body*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2011, (pp. 33–53) p. 39.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

³¹ Ion Pop, *Avangarda în literatura română / The Avant Garde in Romanian Literature*, Cartier popular, Chișinău, Cartier, 2017, p. 37.

director Jean Cocteau, Dadaist and surrealist poet and writer Philip Soupault, Tzara, avant-garde Georgian and French writer and poet Iliazzd rendered into movement by Lizica, French poet, writer and art critic Guillaume Apollinaire and Éluard. The musical accompaniment was to be provided by composers Georges Auric, Darius Milhaud, Igor Stravinsky, and Erik Satie. Lizica collaborated with the latter as a dancer for his *Gymnopédies* wearing costumes designed by Romanian-French sculptor, photographer and painter Constantin Brâncuși³² (1876, Hobita – 1957, Paris, France). Finally, the first half would have ended with movie projections from visual artists Man Ray, Charles Sheeler and Henry L. Richter. The second half would have featured Lizica in *Le coeur à barbe* in costumes created by Sonia. While the event itself was interrupted, Tzara's play had already been performed in 1921³³. Despite the grand soiree fiasco, Lizica's collaboration with Tzara and Sonia continued, as she was also cast as the main female character in another Tzara play, *Le coeur à gaz (The Gas Heart)* throughout the early 1920s, including a private show at the Delaunay household in 1925. The event was recounted for the Romanian avant-garde magazine *Integral* by one of the invited guests, French surrealist writer René Crevel as an impressive act of syncretic artistic expression³⁴.

Besides artists as Sonia Delaunay, who opened artistic currents to the general, bourgeois masses, cinema was beginning to be viewed as a noteworthy art form with promising prospects for profit, technical innovation, but also culture creation. Interwar Romanian adepts quickly recognized the potential of building a Romanian movie industry, that was virtually ignored by authorities until movies were proven to be efficient propaganda tools as the worldwide political climate was increasingly veering towards war in the late 1930s. Nevertheless, a cult of national cinema beauty was built around actresses like Sevastia

³² Doina Lemny, *Lizica Codreanu: o dansatoare româncă în avangarda pariziană/Lizica Codreanu: A Romanian Dancer in the Parisian Avant garde*, Bucharest, Vellant, 2012, p. 35.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

³⁴ René Crevel. "La mode moderne. Visite à Sonia Delaunay / Modern Fashion. A Visit at Sonia Delaunay", in *Integral. Revistă de Sinteză Modernă/Integral. Journal of Modern Synthesis*. no. 6-7. 1925. pp. 18-19.

Popescu, Elvira Godeanu or the ballerina Elena Prodanovici-Bulandra³⁵. Even more, number of movie stars of Romanian descent, including Elvire Popesco (1894, Bucharest – 1993, Paris), Alice Cocea (1899, Sinaia – 1970, Boulogne-Billancourt, France) or Pola Illéry (1909, Corabia – 1993, Palos Verdes Estates, California, USA), who activated especially on the French screen, have been considered as genuine Parisian fashion icons.

Pola Illéry, born Paula Iliescu and whose stage name was inspired by another Eastern European movie star, Pola Negri, maintained no secrecy about her career start as a beauty queen³⁶, and is nowadays remembered mostly for her participation in the 1930 multinational *Paramount Parade* Romanian version³⁷. Alice Cocea, on the other hand, despite beginning as one of the most prominent Parisian movie stars, led a life filled with applause and glamour, accompanied by scandals and dramatic love affairs, which eventually led to her being blacklisted and nowadays largely forgotten. Unlike Pola, Alice had graduated from the prestigious *Conservatoire de Paris* when she was 17. She debuted on the stage shortly after, and continued to grace the stage, especially at the *Maturins* theatre. She was eventually cast in movies. Her collaborators included Jean Cocteau or renowned French actor, entertainer Maurice Chevalier. Cocteau also had close professional ties with Elvire Popesco and was a close acquaintance of princess Marthe Bibesco. Alice and Elvire also had a direct link to the fashion world, as they both had a preferred designer on and offscreen. Elvire collaborated with designer Marcelle Dormoy³⁸ who admitted in 1938 that she preferred working with established actresses, like Elvire, because of the highly generous remuneration³⁹. Elvire was often quoted by French cinema magazines, such as *La cinématographie française*, as having chosen a production for

³⁵ Jean Mihail, *Filmul Românesc de altădată / The Romanian Cinema of Yore*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1967, p. 162.

³⁶ H. Doru. "O româncă pe firmamentul ecranului / A Romanian on the Screen", in *Realitatea Ilustrată*, no. IV.159, 13 February 1930, p. 4,

³⁷ Mihail, *op.cit.*, p. 161.

³⁸ G. Turquan. "Paris habille Hollywood", in *La cinématographie française*. Paris. Issue 1035, September-December 1938. p. 128

³⁹ "Mme Marcelle Dormoy / Mrs. Marcelle Dormoy", in *La cinématographie française*. Paris. no. 1035, September-December 1938. p. 39.

its treatment of fashion or costume. Alice collaborated with the famous haute couture creator Cristobal Balenciaga, for whom she also worked as a model for the *Nelombo* perfume alongside French actress Gaby Morlay. Apart from that, she was also featured on *Agnès Mode* and *Lotion Garnier* ads⁴⁰.

Even though both Elvire and Alice were omnipresent in the dedicated interwar French press, the outcome of their immense fame has been at the opposite sides of the spectrum. The difference was made by the way in which the two actresses used the power as stage and screen icons. Elvire was revered by the French moviegoing public, who even forgave her thick Romanian accent because she otherwise represented everything that could be termed as Parisian elegance. She presented herself as a lady with exquisite fashion and style taste, with a reserved and refined attitude. This was not lost to her admirers even when she was still performing on the Bucharest revue stages. As early as 1928, writer, essayist and journalist Mihail Sebastian praised her deep understanding of the mental and physical decorum required for an actress to maintain her fame⁴¹. Both Alice and Elvire had lucrative careers before and during World War II, including Vichy France, with all connections and encounters such pursuits entailed. However, only Elvire managed to maintain and even raise her professional status as an actress after the war, and has not been contested to this day, unlike personalities such as Coco Chanel who were virtually chased out of France to avoid the fervent post-war condemnation of collaborators. While Chanel returned triumphantly in the 1950s, Alice chose to live the rest of her life quietly, as a painter in the French countryside. Elvire's dedication to her craft was awarded by the French authorities, including two French Legion of Honour medals as an Officer in 1970 and Commander in 1989⁴², and a

⁴⁰ Gérard Damion, *Alice Cocea (1899-1970) de la gloire à l'oubli / Alice Cocea (1899-1970) from Glory to Oblivion* (2017), Revised Version, in *Edition999* [Online], Available at: <https://www.edition999.info/Alice-Cocea-1899-1970-de-la-gloire.html#> [Accessed 1 November 2018].

⁴¹ Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal II. Jurnal indirect: 1926-1945 / Diary II. Indirect Diary: 1926-1945*, Teșu Solomovici (ed), Bucharest: Teșu, 2011, pp. 64-65.

⁴² Ion Manea (ed), "Popescu, Elvira", *Români în știință și cultura occidentală / Romanians in Western Science and Culture*, Academia Româno-Americană de Științe și Arte / American-Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Davis CA, ARA Publications, 1992, (pp. 294-297) p. 296.

Molière prize granted by the Association of French Actors. She is also an honorary member of the Romanian Academy since 1993, and her name is still mentioned with respect when referring to cinema history both in France and in Romania. Elvire can also be directly linked to the artistic world, as she was credited as one of the main inspirations for Henri Matisse's painting *La blouse roumaine (The Romanian Blouse)*, alongside aristocrat, writer and academician Hélène Vacaresco (1864, Bucharest - 1947, Paris), Anne de Noailles and Marthe Bibesco⁴³.

As movie studios realized the importance of movie costume design, the French cinema industry was caught behind Hollywood in displaying Parisian haute couture. This was promptly addressed by the French companies, intent on using the fact that Paris has been the centre of fashion and elegance as an element of pride to be displayed and celebrated in cinema productions. Movie stars became the vehicles of fashion dissemination. While they did not create their garments themselves, they were faithful to their chosen image. Actresses like Elvira and Alice had a couturier of choice who made sure they always appeared in their best light in their professional and private lives. Even more, the 1930s introduced the world to the eccentric Mitza Bricard (1900, possibly in Paris⁴⁴ – 1977, Paris), famed for her original use of garments and for being the one who introduced panther jungle prints and the prevalence of purple on the Parisian fashion scene⁴⁵. She would later

⁴³ Constantin Roman, "Blouse Roumaine. From Dracula to Ceausescu – The Un-sung Voices of Romanian Women" (2001) Portofolio, *Constantin Roman* [Online], Available at: <http://www.constantinroman.com/blouseroumaine/> [Accessed 10 June 2018].

⁴⁴ C.D., "Mitzah Bricard: Christian Dior's Leopardess" (12 November 2018), *The Coincidental Dandy*, Available at: <http://thecoincidentaldandy.blogspot.com/2018/11/mitzah-bricard-christian-diors.html> [Accessed 8 December 2018].

⁴⁵ Dan-Silviu Boerescu, *Mitza Bricard - muza lui Dior și alte românce care au rescris istoria modei / Mitza Bricard - Dior's Muse and other Romanian Women who Rewrote Fashion History*, vol XVI, Bucharest, Integral, 2018, p. 11.

become a hat designer, stylist and Christian Dior's muse, as well as the design studio manager at the Dior fashion house⁴⁶.

While relatively unacknowledged at home, the Romanian influence on Parisian fashion was much more than the passive display of innovative designs and a glamorous attitude. As a liaison between the old world and the new social, political and economic global reality, Princess Marthe Bibesco established a complex impression on both her contemporary world and history in general, adding to her extensive genetic heritage. With close relationships with French personalities like writer and critic Marcel Proust, poet, writer and diplomat Paul Claudel, or author and abbot Arthur Mugnier, along with the most important political players of the time, Princess Bibesco was at the heart of the interwar cultural and political life⁴⁷.

What sets her apart from the other Romanian aristocratic or artistic elites who exerted great influence in Parisian fashion, was the fact that she could very well be considered one of the first modern fashion theorists. She was a regular contributor to French *Vogue*, where she had her own column dedicated to various aspects of fashion conceptual, technical and aesthetic interpretations. She published some of these editorials with Parisian editor Grasset in form of an anthology titled *Noblesse de robe* (*Nobility of Dress*), nowadays often ignored, and even misquoted by one of Marthe's leading biographers, Christine Sutherland as *Noblesse oblige* (*Nobility Obliges*)⁴⁸. However, its interwar reception was highly enthusiastic. Fashion historian Ulrich Lehmann⁴⁹ noted that one of the book's reviews in the French daily *Le Temps* was placed between two articles that reflected important foreign policy themes, one referring to the German minister's French visit, while the

⁴⁶ Alicia Drake, *The Beautiful Fall: Fashion, Genius and Glorious Excess in 1970s Paris*, London, New Delhi, New York and Sydney, Bloomsbury, 2012, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Mihai Dimitrie Sturdza, *Aristocrați români în lumea lui Proust: Anton Bibescu, Martha Bibescu, Anne de Noailles, Elena Bibescu / The Romanian Aristocrats in Proust's World: Antoine Bibesco, Marthe Bibesco, Anne de Noailles, Elena Bibesco*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2016, pp. 101-102.

⁴⁸ Christine Sutherland, *Enchantress: Marthe Bibesco and Her World*, London, John Murray, 1997, p. 185.

⁴⁹ Ulrich Lehmann. "Introduction to Excerpts from 'Noblesse de Robe'", in *Art in Translation*, Vol. 7, no. 2, 2015, p. 245.

second an account of US President Calvin Coolidge's anti-war sentiments. This demonstrates Marthe's cultural and political prestige which she wholeheartedly used, even when her writings refer to the so-called feminine interest subjects. It also validates the very idea of fashion as a superior artistic expression. Her writing, especially from a fashion perspective, imbued French fashion philosophy with an elitist feminist take on women's appearance viewed as *art for the sake of art*. In this way, fashion had a unique aesthetic with its own discourse regulations dedicated to women worldwide, most of the time created by women.

The title itself is a clever wordplay suggesting both historical connections to the high-office French aristocrats, as opposed to the military or family ranks⁵⁰ linked to Bibesco's own family origin, as well the interpretation of fashion as a form of high art, worthy of serious investigation, as the French term *robe* can mean both robe and dress. Bibesco explained this turn of phrase as a realization she had after two visits. The first was a London exhibition titled *French dolls of Fashion*, dedicated to wooden dolls brought from France in the seventeenth century, that had presumably brought French fashion into England while Louis XIV and William of Orange were engaged in naval war. The second location she toured was Coco Chanel's⁵¹, who she called Mademoiselle, fashion house on Place Vendôme. Despite being refused categorically at first due to the critical need for secrecy as Chanel was creating her new collection, Bibesco noted she used a "*letter that opened all doors*" and Mademoiselle could no longer deny her entrance. By observing Chanel in her own element, and the power she commanded over herself and those around, Bibesco understood the *couturière* as a new form of royalty, that would replace nobility of birth or station, with nobility of dress, understood as the epitome of artistic inspiration. She likened the functioning of aristocratic households, now extended to fashion houses, led by a matriarch or creator, to the hierarchy and dynamics within a military sea-faring vessel, with guards wearing *crêpe de chine* uniforms, protecting their captain's secret couture battleplans.

⁵⁰'Noblesse de robe' (5 April 2016), in *Encyclopædia Britannica* [Online], Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/noblesse-de-robe> [Accessed 18 September 2018].

⁵¹ Lehmann. *op.cit.*, p. 245.

The fashion designer's creativity awarded her the royal ranks over her staff and her loyal clients, based on the quality of her original creative output. In this way, Bibesco quoting Nietzsche who expressed his wish for women who give dreams, instead of children, described the fashion creator as a manifestation of the former:

"Here she is, the woman who supplies dreams, because she clothes realities; here she is, severely dressed, standing like a commander in his control room. Her face bears traces of that noble fatigue that stamps itself on those in authority, and she speaks with the clarity of those accustomed to give orders. [...]

In the presence of one who wielded such power, and over so much of the globe, the old French expression *Noblesse de robe* acquired a new meaning for me. Another judicial bench was born. And should Mademoiselle require ancestors, can't she lay claim to the proud little dolls that, in the display cases of a museum in London, perpetuate the exploits of their predecessors? Isn't she a direct descendant of the *Dames de Nouveauté* that crossed the Channel in 1675 and forced the canons of the English fleet to fall silent?"⁵²

Their relationship ensured Coco's presence in her semi-autobiographical articles in *Noblesse de robe*, beyond Mademoiselle, as *Tote, the Illustrious Couturiere*, and possibly also literally as *Gabrielle – or the Accessories Genius*. Bibesco described "Tote" as a "force of couture"⁵³, a potent equalising force among races and cultures, the "powerful autocrat of the thirteenth couture international"⁵⁴. Indeed, Chanel's strength, despite her humble origins, relied in her dedication to always bring new ideas, "to abandon a truth for another that is even more truthful"⁵⁵, always on the move to exercise her influence over the women of the world:

It is through her that the reconciliation of peoples has made some visible advancements in recent times. All the women who carry through the fashion of Tote's knitwear, her flower, her dress or her

⁵² Marthe Bibesco, "Excerpts from 'Noblesse de Robe'", in *Art in Translation*, John Goodman (trans.), vol. 7, no. 2, May 2015, pp. 247-248.

⁵³ Marthe Bibesco, *Noblesse de robe / Nobility of Dress*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1928, p. 195.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 202.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 205.

striped scarf, have their equals, and recognize their fellow beings, in New York, in London, in Rome, in Buenos Aires. As far as the word “religion” implies a link, Tote’s bicouleur scarf makes them coreligionists. The Parisian street where her signboard shines, the two satisfactory syllables, is the one where a traveller, coming from Argentina, will immediately know the name. And we can say, without too much misunderstanding, about the globe, that civilization emerges where Tote’s clientele begins, and ceases with it. The product she exchanges for the most beautiful currencies of fashion, what is it, if not her intelligence?⁵⁶

Throughout the 1920s, Coco Chanel was closely connected to the Southern and Eastern European diasporas, especially the post-revolution Russian émigrés, and a lucrative relationship with pianist of Polish descent and great modern artist patron and friend Misia Sert. According to Suzanne Lussier⁵⁷, after becoming Chanel’s muse and mentor, Sert introduced her avant-garde artistic circles, which included artists like Iliazd and Russian painter Paul Mansouroff who both created “stunning designs” for her jerseys, or Jean Cocteau with whom she collaborated in 1922 for his play *Antigone*, with hand-knitted coats and dresses decorated with traditional stylized motifs⁵⁸. Chanel has also collaborated with the Ballets Russes in 1924, for the one-act *Le train bleu* (*The Blue Train*) ballet based on a Cocteau script, set in a beach resort, a location quite familiar to Chanel⁵⁹. Consequently, it is safe to assume that, as one of the actresses closely linked to Cocteau, and even though Elvire was Dormoy’s faithful client, she must have frequented the same entourage as Chanel at least partially, which would also suggest an indirect connection to Marthe Bibesco as Chanel’s own regular client. While the apparent lack of mutual recognition, the two key representatives of Romanian fashion become actors on the same avant-garde, Art Deco fashion scene, entering from two opposite angles.

Bucharest: À la mode

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 196-197.

⁵⁷ Suzanne Lussier, *Art Deco Fashion*, London, V&A Publishing, 2003, p. 36.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

Bucharest guides and registries offered extensive lists of dressmaker shops and fashion stores throughout the capital, many of which were not as stylish as presented. The most prominent shops included *Maison Nouvelle*, *Gruber*, *Maison Suzanne*, or *Bertheil*. An interesting case is *Léon & Adolphe*, advertised as the only Parisian Couturiers in Bucharest in the early 1920s⁶⁰. Milliners included *Mode Jacob* for straw and felt hats. *Jacobson*, *Wilhelm Stenhart*, or *H. Reich* were among the most advertised furriers. Some fashion stores, like *Ungar*, *Lisette* and *Jeanne d'Arc* for haute couture, also included dressmaking and tailoring. Outfits were ready- or custom-made, or they copied the latest usually Parisian fashion journal models, by both the private and professional manufacturers. Romanian women were expected to be adept at creating their own garments, which explains the prevalence of offers for raw materials. Many ready-made clothes stores habitually presented themselves as fashion houses, eclipsing the actual few exclusive Romanian genuine designers, like *Weis* in the 1930s, located on Calea Victoriei⁶¹. Their establishments equalled biggest the lavish, demurred couture houses, save their international renown and designation, as they were commonly known as tailoring companies⁶². Retail and wholesale stores everywhere in Bucharest therefore often included *House of* and variants in their names. The most prominent fashion stores, that sold everything related to fashion, from raw materials to prêt-à-porter, included *Casa Rose-France*, *Femme Élégante*, the *Missir* chain, or *Casa Superb*. Bucharesters had access to the most fashionable fabrics, and combinations said to be brought directly from Paris. The prices were similarly spread across the quality and demand spectrum. For instance, according to its 1922 ads⁶³, luxury textile store *Au Bon Goût* on Lipscani sold fabrics ranging from 96 lei⁶⁴ for a meter

⁶⁰ See *Tout-Bucarest. Almanach du High-Life / All-Bucharest. The High-Life Almanac*, Bucharest, Société par 'L'Indépendance Roumaine', 1924, pp. 30-44.

⁶¹ Graziella Doicescu, *Captivantul Bucureşti Interbelic: Tablete / The Captivating Interwar Bucharest: Tablets*, Bucharest, Vremea, 2008, p. 125.

⁶² Erastia Peretz, *Stele căzătoare / Shooting Stars*, Bucharest, Cugetarea - Georgescu Delafra, 1946, p. 310.

⁶³ See *Adevărul*, no. 34.11704, 5 June 1922: p. 8.

⁶⁴ Around RON 37, amounting to \$0.6 in 1922, \$9 today.

of its exclusive crêpe romain, while its most expensive a meter of Moroccan fabric advertised for summer dresses in all modern colours, for 295 lei⁶⁵.

Apart from geographical and commercial data, the real life of Bucharesters is much more vividly reflected in the press and in quarterly publications dedicated to Bucharest, with a multifaceted areal of useful information, future event announcements and written and visual reports from past occasions. In the 1924 edition of *Tout Bucarest. Almanach du High Life de L'Indépendance Roumaine (All of Bucharest. The High Life Almanac of L'Indépendance Roumaine)*, all written in French and featuring useful information about the year to come, together with various articles on the popular subjects in the previous year and that would most likely be continued in the new year. According to a contributor signing as Le Sphinx, Bucharest is very similar with Paris when counting the number of divorces⁶⁶, and even worse, women's coming out into the public life is most likely a double-edged sword, because, he adds, the weaker sex lacks honesty in her relationship, which could very well be the case in her public, namely professional, life⁶⁷. Furthermore, the author critiqued the fact that the women of his generation want more than just be housekeepers, wanting to prove that they know more than men⁶⁸.

One of the most transparent sources for Bucharest's social life in the 1930s was the daily *Le Moment*. Written entirely in French, it was designed as an illustrated newspaper for political, economic and social news and its target demographic was the Bucharest elite. *Le Moment*, however, was not the only source for detailed descriptions of Bucharest's fashionable gatherings. Even otherwise deemed-serious newspapers such as *Adevărul* published a regular social column, with reporters specifically tasked to attend such events. What set *Le Moment* apart was the fact that it offered entire photographic spreads depicting parties, horse race fashions, or official dinners, which suggests that it also employed at least a photographer to accompany their reporters on

⁶⁵ Around RON 118, amounting to \$2 in 1922, \$29 today.

⁶⁶ *Tout-Bucarest, op.cit.*, p. 58.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 60.

assignments. In November 1935, *Le Moment* published an account of a lavish Sunday afternoon tea hosted by Princess Bibesco, followed by a lecture by the Marthe on M.D.J. Hall's latest book, *Rumanian Furrow*. This article is a departure from the usual social event reports published throughout the interwar Romanian press, as the reporter mentions the designers, with basic cut, colour or material markers, instead of simply focusing on the wearer's appearance. According to the presentation, Princess Bibesco received her guests in a Chanel black velour dress, at her Brancovan castle, in honour of the Anglo-Romanian Society members, presided by Miss N. Titulesco, who also donned a Chanel Marocain silk dress with a golden belt and necklace. Apart from that, the unnamed reporter only considered the outfit worn by Princess Ghika-Comanesti, a white Lanvin dress as worth mentioning, while the other guests were only featured by name⁶⁹.

Conclusion

The relationship between Paris and Bucharest is a complex area of analysis that includes bilateral cultural and commercial exchanges. Consequently, only treating Bucharest fashion as a faithful, yet mindless, imitation of Parisian innovations would be a gross oversimplification. It would also ignore the impact Romanians had on what became understood as “genuinely Parisian”. On the other hand, treating what emerged culturally, aesthetically or politically from the French space as a pure expression of displaced creative elites. The true character of this so-called Parisian influence is inherently modern, as its parameters cannot be clearly delineated.

This phenomenon could be clearly witnessed within the artistic and literary network created in the first half of the twentieth century becomes a syncretic portrait of the artistic interwar Paris, adding together the fine arts, in sculpture, painting and illustration, bourgeois design, movement and verbalisation. This allowed for the creative expression to extend beyond the scope of the traditional, quite restricted means of display and performance. Constantin Brâncuși became a one-time costume designer for his muse, Lizica Codreanu. Robert Delaunay was

⁶⁹ ‘Dans la monde / in the World.’ *Le Moment*, no. 235, 23 November 1935, p. 2.

able to concentrate on his art, while Sonia was the breadwinner, not only as a couturiere, but also as a multifaceted designer. Their direct link is Lizica, who also closely collaborated with Sonia, and their common friend, avant-garde poet and Dadaism cofounder Tristan Tzara.

While apparently part of discrete circles, Elvire Popesco and Alice Cocea with their projected appearance, and Marthe Bibesco, both due to her style and writings, had become Parisian fashion icons. Their influence may not be as visible in interwar Romania, or in retrospective accounts, however, they were indirect trendsetters in Bucharest. Consequently, the Paris-Bucharest city chic was created concurrently, from a wide array of multicoloured, multilingual sources in a fusion of styles and interpretations, just like a Sonia Delaunay simultaneous dress. Their existence is evermore immortalized as avant-garde performances were often recorded of photographed owing to their one-of-a-kind recital design.